

356 *Quest Sociales* No 8
LECTURE

ON THE
BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED

FROM

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES,
Bibliothèque de Québec
Le Séminaire de Québec
DELIVERED AT THE
3, rue de l'Université
TORONTO MECHANICS' INSTITUTE,
Québec

FEBRUARY 5, 1851.

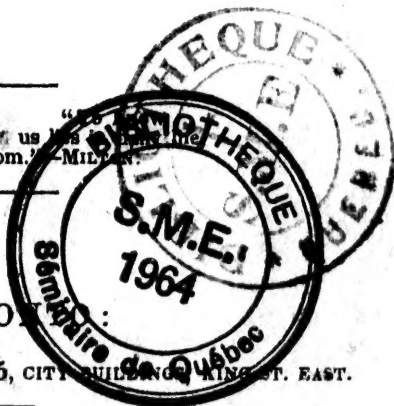
BY WALTER EALES, PAINTER.

That which befores us
Is the prime wisdom.


TORONTO

PRINTED BY JAMES STEPHENS, 5, CITY BUILDING, KING ST. EAST.

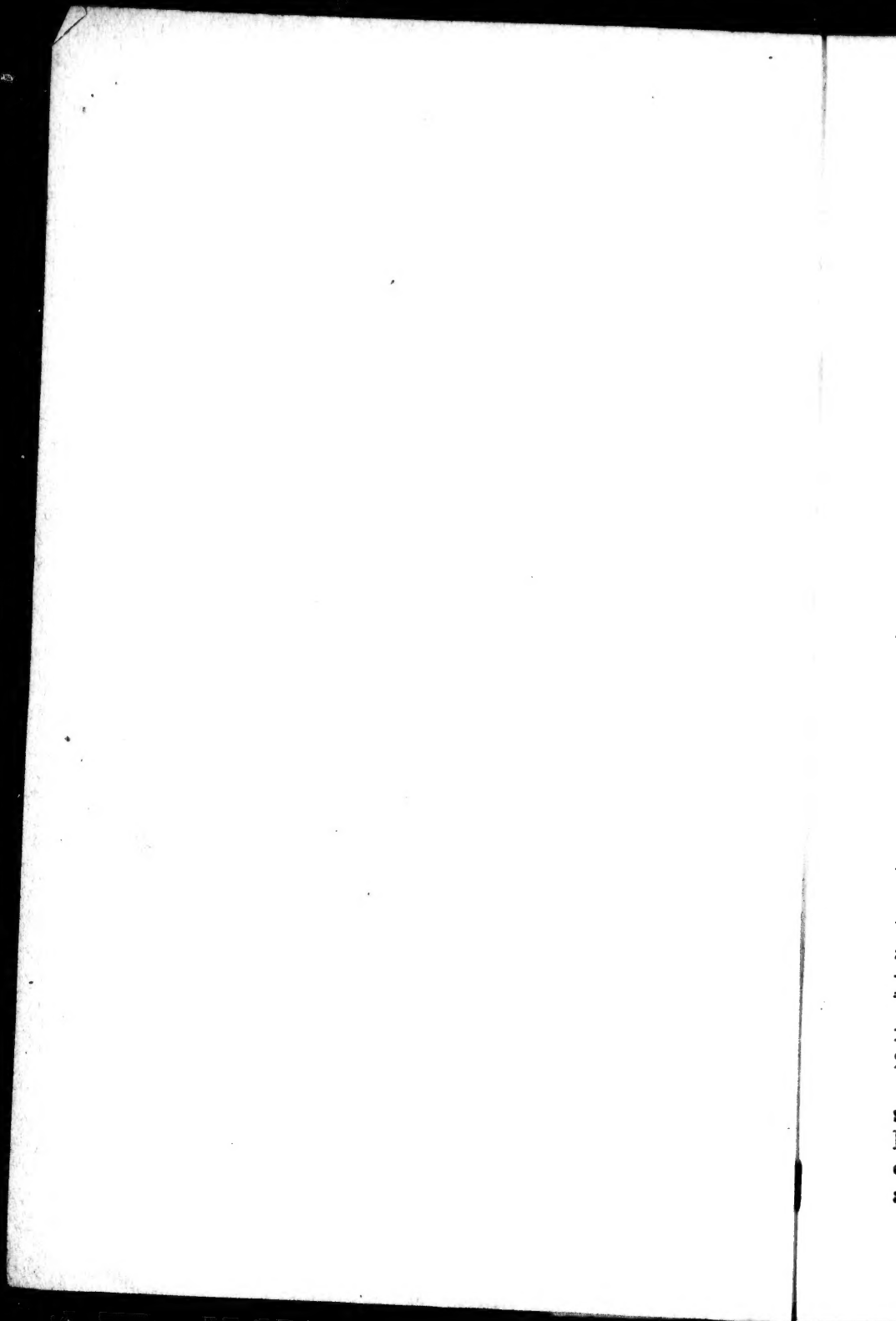
1851.



Mon L. H. Lafontaine
with the Authors
Compliments



te



LECTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THE subject which I am about to bring under your notice, is the benefits to be derived from Mechanics' Institutions, and the propriety of Mechanics and the working classes becoming members of this valuable institution. It is a subject of vast importance, and I feel I cannot do it that justice which it deserves. I beg leave to inform those who are not acquainted with this Institution, that the upper part of the building belongs to its members: it contains lecture-hall, committee and reading rooms, with thirty-two reviews, magazines, and newspapers, taken regularly, and a library of 1470 volumes. The annual amount of subscription for ordinary members is 7s. 6d. per annum, with an entrance fee of 2s. 6d.; to junior members, 5s. annually, and 1s. 3d. entrance. Tickets can be obtained by application to the Secretary or Librarian. The privileges connected with the Institute is attending the lectures, use of the library and reading room, (which is open from seven to half-past nine o'clock every evening, sundays excepted.) With these advantages I am surprised to find only 270 members, which ought at the lowest calculation to be 2,000 out of a population of from 25 to 30,000.

When I look around and see your beautiful buildings, stores, and factories, full of intelligent mechanics, who have the power to manufacture equal to any other opulent city, allow me to say, that many of you are apparently ignorant of the benefits to be obtained by

being members of this valuable institution, which is in its infancy, and great praise is due to its founders, who have commenced a grand work, and it wants your assistance to finish and make a temple to hold the knowledge of this rapidly growing agricultural and commercial city. The gold mines of California, where thousands go at the sacrifice of health and life, are nothing to that valuable mine which your library contains,—knowledge. By becoming members you will be the means of bursting asunder the bonds of ignorance; and morality, virtue, knowledge, and happiness will find their way into your stores, factories, and every dwelling in this fine flourishing city. Look at the works of art—buildings, tunnels, bridges, steam-boats;—the wonderful Crystal Palace, now in course of erection, to hold the handicraft of all nations. I have been informed, that a number of valuable articles, manufactured in this city, are to be exhibited at that great exhibition; and, I have no doubt of their being much admired, and success will attend the manufacturers.

Another great work of art is the telegraph, which sends intelligence with the velocity of lightning—through the bush, over hills, dales, lakes, rivers, and under the English Channel; into the offices in cities and towns, over the world. I would I had the power of sending knowledge as quick, I would, indeed, be a powerful operator upon the minds of men. And, who are the cause, (under Providence,) of all these works of art, but mechanics and the working classes? And now, I will venture to say to those gentlemen, who look upon the working classes as nothing but mere machines, that I know a machine more powerful than that constructed by Watt—and still more important than that made by Arkwright, and capable of attaining much higher perfection. The whole world does not possess ten thousand of Watt's machines, nor twenty thousand of those of Arkwright. I am acquainted with a description of machine of which the earth possesses numbers to the amount of two thousand millions. The steam-engines throughout the world do not represent a force superior to that of four hundred thousand horses, but I know

one which represents, by its multiplication, the force of a hundred millions of horses. What then is this machine? Must I pronounce it?—Must I adopt language to express it?—It is MAN! This alone should be sufficient to demonstrate the material and pecuniary advantage of improving the productive and labouring faculty of the human species. In all classes the understanding is extensive and rapid; the courage is ardent and enterprising; increasing by the difficulties to be surmounted as well as by the dangers to be overcome: if we are deficient in any thing, it is, perhaps, in perseverance, particularly when success advances slowly to reward our efforts. But in this respect it would be exceedingly unjust to overlook or to deny the progress which your city has made during the last twenty years. People, in this respect, like individuals, are matured by great circumstances, and great misfortunes; and of this we may be sure, that when a city becomes illustrious, it has ceased to be frivolous. At this moment Toronto possesses, in the intelligence of its inhabitants as well as in its resources, every thing which can place it amongst the industrious, enlightened, powerful, and civilized cities of the world. But to obtain this high rank, we have occasion for labours the most extended, and exertions of mind and of body distributed through all classes of society; amongst the learned—to discover the means and to give directions; amongst artists—for the application of useful discoveries, and to trace the new paths which inventors describe.

But the degree of credit or usefulness in this world depends infinitely more on well-directed and temperate activity than on the difference of original capabilities; for, however great the powers, without energy, without exercise, they remain latent, and this makes the grand difference. We know not the powers we possess till we try them; some of you have tried them; and the circumstances in which you have been placed have made you think and feel, and have called forth your latent energies, so that but for the want of collegiate education you would be prepared to run the career of science much better than those sons of ease imagine, whom you

have rather over than under estimated. I may exclaim with the poet:—

“Surely there is some heavenly power,
That rightly suffers wrong;
Gives vice to bloom *its little hour*,
But virtue *late and long*.”

As christians it is our duty to love the Author of our being “with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength;” to “present our bodies, souls, and spirits, a living sacrifice,” to the Author of all, which, for our advantage, is indeed “a reasonable service.” Oh! that this were the case in every family and in every government, (for governments are but families on a larger scale,) and that the whole world would consider themselves but as one family! then might we hope to see man ruled by the faculties which link him to heaven, and not by those he has in common with animals; then, and not till then, shall benevolence rule the earth, and Justice lift aloft her scales.

“Peace o’er the world her olive wand extend,
And white-robed Innocence from Heaven descend.”

I shall now proceed a step further, and view Mechanics’ Institutions in their adaptation to the higher attributes and more dignified relationship of man; and, in doing so, shall avail myself of the labours and sentiments of a modern author, himself a mechanic.*

“He errs greatly who regards the mechanic simply as a curious piece of mechanism, consisting of brains and bones, muscles and nerves—endowed with extraordinary capabilities of labour, and who treats him precisely as he would any other piece of machinery, casting him off when no longer serviceable. Man is a being of mysterious complexity; and he who in subjugating his powers, to menial tasks, overlooks or blinks this fact, commits a sacrilege upon his nature. Whilst there is nothing too low or grovelling for him to stoop to, there is, at the same time, ~~nothing~~ too high to be unattainable

* MR. QUINTON, Author of the Prize Essay on the Sabbath, “Heaven’s Antidote to the Curse of Labour, &c.”

by his ambition. While his feet tread the ground—while his brow fronts the sky—while his hands turn the sod, tug at the oar, or ply the loom, his soul, in its spiritual outgoings, may be roaming among the stars. The extremes of majesty and meanness thus meet in his nature. His perishing body establishes his affinity with the dust; whilst his indestructible spirit links him with the Heavens. His limbs furnish him with instruments fitted for labour; but his intellect qualifies him for thought. The meanest serf, whose figure is bowed earthwards, by the hardships of his lot, is invested with an immortal *mind*,—all unhewn, and shapeless, and beautiless, it may be; but still laying there, embedded in the deep mines of his nature, dungeoned in darkness, peradventure, but still alive, looking hopefully through its bars, and struggling to be free, void and unfashioned now, but with capacities for treasuring up a vast fund of ideas.—Poor and talentless in its present state; but nevertheless, a mint that may hereafter coin, and give currency to its intellectual opulence.—Barren and birthless now; but containing in its womb the dormant rudiments of noble purposes, startling discoveries, beneficent deeds or mighty revolutions. The annals of politics, the chronicles of science, and the archives of religion, bear witness to the bountiful upspringings of great and good men from these unenclosed wastes of humanity. Science can boast of its Kepler, its Fergusson, its Watt, its Newton, and its Stephenson; and literature can point, amidst innumerable others, to the names of Erasmus, Shakespeare, and Burns—all these having sprung from the loins of labour. Philanthropy has called some from the forge and from the anvil, to the more blessed work of fusing hostile hearts and wielding human sympathies. Religion, too, has ever selected her bravest and holiest champions from amongst the ‘common people.’ In primitive times she found her John, and James and Peter, following the occupation of fishermen, on the banks of the Galilean Lake, and taking them from thence made them the apostles of her sublime revelations; and, in this late age of missions she has drawn her most illustrious christian heroes—her Martin, her Brainard,

her Carey, her Williams, her Knibb, and her Moffatt, from similar spheres of social obscurity and sent them forth to humanize, regenerate, and redeem mankind. Such being the inherent grandeur of MAN, even when found in the rudest condition, and fulfilling the humblest functions.

Thus the benefits resulting from Mechanics' Institutes, being made expressly for man, while they minister refreshment to his corporeal frame, would not over look the higher necessities of his compound nature, nor are we disappointed in these expectations,—it comes to give rest to matter, and liberty to mind: whilst it soothes the senses, it unlashes the spirit from its tether; it withdraws the hands from gold-gathering, that it may feed and feast the intellect with knowledge; it disinters the soul from the rubbish of earthly cares, and plumes it for higher converse and loftier studies. It favours inaction only so far as it shall contribute to the advancement of intelligence. Thus it clearly indicates that the working man has a mind, demanding to be exercised and enriched, as that he has a body sighing in its weariness for the sweet indulgence of rest: and how beautiful it is adapted to the former, as well as to the latter of these ends.—It supplies the great desideratum of the artizan and husbandman's plodding existence;—leisure for profitable reading and mental and moral culture. Its benign influences are calculated to warm into life, and nurse into maturity, many of the finer attributes of mankind; and who can compute the number of dormant minds it has quickened into activity,—the fine intellects it has opened and expanded,—the memories it has stored with precious truths,—the trailing virtues it has supported and invigorated,—and the thriving vices it has withered, uprooted and destroyed: it is, moreover, the peculiar excellence of this educational system, that it only develops in a right manner. It does this, not by artificial stimulants, forcing a precocious and sickly growth, but by simply aiding the healthy action of nature.

The domestic advantages resulting from being members of this Institute are numerous, besides many incidental and collateral benefits resulting to the homes

of the working classes, there are three great ends directly promoted by it, that are worthy of special regard: it favours the cultivation of natural affection, it secures family fellowship, and it generates and fosters domestic piety. The institution of families does not owe its origin to human ingenuity; God has himself grouped the human race in these miniature associations; and by the refined instincts which he has implanted in their bosoms, has in all ages, and amidst all the confused comminglings of mankind, preserved this unique institution from destruction. The homes of men, are the centres of nearly all the light and warmth that cheer the social world,—the arks that shelter mankind from the raging tumults and storms of life,—the cells where the living and the loved, hoard the sweet fruits of their reciprocal affection,—the well-springs that supply mankind with the purest draughts of earthly happiness. Attachment to home is always strongest in the hearts of the virtuous and the good. While it will be found, that those who have abandoned themselves to sensualism and vice, have first learned to loathe the quiet joys, the chaste delights, and the gentle affections of the family circle.

All our natural affections are quickened by frequent and kindly domestic communion. The offices of love, the acts of devotedness and proofs of tenderness, constantly repeated among relatives, mingling in the same dwelling, cannot but powerfully affect their emotional nature, and continue to weave, day by day, a chain of love around their hearts. The strength of this chain will depend, in a great measure upon the frequency or infrequency of the intercourse subsisting between the respective members of the household. It is proverbial, that absence tends to the estrangement of the heart, even from those claiming the closest kinship with us; where our seasons of communion therefore, only occur at lengthened intervals, or where they are hurried and embarrassed, by the intrusion of care and anxiety, must of necessity be thereby relaxed and weakened.

These observations bring at once to our view, the position of the working classes in their respective families, as it respects the cultivation of those natural affections,

from which so large a share of their earthly enjoyments spring. The brother caresses the sister, the father lavishes his fondness upon the children, the husband tenderly greets the wife, and the zone of charity encompasseth the household. The pulses of affection are quickened in every soul, each beholds his or her happiness, imaged in the beaming countenances of all beside them, and thus love ripens apace beneath the clear sunshine of the heart.

To the Mechanic and working classes, opportunities for domestic fellowship. This is an amplification of the idea upon which we have already dilated. During the labour of the Mechanic, it frequently happens he has to work in the country and only comes home on Saturday evening.—By far the largest portion of their time is consumed amidst their coadjutors in toil, many of whom are comparative strangers to them, others are unworthy of their confidence and friendship, whilst the fellowship of not a few, is decidedly distasteful and distressing.—It imparts a double joy therefore, to the intelligent and virtuous man, to be able to escape for a season from such contacts, and to find a temporary retreat in the bosom of a cheerful family. Here he can breathe freely, in an atmosphere untainted by the impurities that have surrounded him throughout the week—here he can solace his soul with the sweet converse of those he loves. On this evening he has time to imprint, line by line, lineament by lineament, an indelible image of himself, on the hearts of his sons and daughters. On this evening he has leisure to extract the honey of domestic happiness, from the beauteous flowers bursting and blooming around him, in the garden of his home. He has an opportunity to cultivate the affections of his children, by directing them towards worthy objects—to admonish them of their faults and follies—to point out the temptations to which they are exposed—to forewarn them with a parents earnestness, of the perils that beset their steps—to impregnate their minds with sound principles—to instil virtuous sentiments—to extirpate vindictive dispositions—to encourage the exercise of the intellect, and strive to exalt the moral sense, in short, to

weed out their natures, and whatever would prove detrimental to their happiness or usefulness, and, at the same time, to foster in them whatever might tend to improve their characters or give stability to their future lives. If this parent-mission, which, peculiarly falls on the heads of families, was but conscientiously fulfilled, what myriads of youth might be snatched from infamy, and numbers of sorrowful parents, whose heads are prematurely bending to the grave, might spend a happy and extended old age beneath the family-vine they had planted in their days of strength; but in the most critical period of their children's history, their minds and morals were neglected, left exposed to the sower of every sort of evil, and now, alas! they are harvesting a terrible retribution, in the crimes and sufferings of their scattered offsprings. Contrasted with this dark picture, how blessed is the retrospect of a well spent Sabbath in the family! what a sweet preparative for the struggles of the coming week? Where is the father who would not go forth on the Monday morning, brimful with rapture, to toil anew for his wife and children? and how often, as the hot dews of labour roll from his forehead, and his weary arms drop pithless by his side, doth the swift thoughts of home rush over him, reviving him like new wine, and quickening all his flagging energies. The exertions of such a man, acting under abiding impulses, cannot be otherwise than fruitful, and how precious should such fruits be esteemed, when cast into the family circle for the impartial use of all. It is equally cheering to the matronly wife, to be privileged, for one day in seven, to entertain her lord in the peaceful realms wherein she lives and reigns. Exiled to a great extent from his presence in the week, she ardently longs for the day, when her husband shall fill the vacant chair beside the hearth, irradiate the cottage with his smiles, and delight her ear with that voice, whose tones of tenderness whispered away her heart in the romantic days of her early youth; but if the communion of a well-ordered home, be thus refreshing to parents. It is difficult to overrate the hallowing influence it exerts upon the minds of the rising members of the family; it helps to consoli-

date the virtuous formations of their characters ; it preserves the guileless and unsuspecting from the fatal seductions, that bestrew the highways of the world : it restrains those prurient desires, that so often burn in the bosoms of the young, to rush into the world and into the blighting excitement that rages out of doors, and teaches them, betimes that, real happiness may be imbibed at the quiet cisterns of domestic enjoyments, but never from the turbid currents of a dissipated life. The recollections of a happy home, will cling to the young adventurer when his turn comes to plunge into the wild waters of a turbulent world. In the case of him who has swerved from the path of rectitude, the counsels of a serious father, and the fervent pleadings of a pious mother, will vibrate upon his ear amidst the guilty excesses of a profligate career. The earliest impressions of home, are generally the deepest and the last to be effaced ; and when these are of a pleasing character, they will often act like an anchor in steadying the heart of the young sinner and prevent him from driving headlong on the rocks of destruction !” And when we find the good effects which Mechanics’ Institutions have on society, every individual, rich or poor, ought to be a member : and how delightful to the working class, to come in the evening to hear a lecture, with his wife and daughters—for every member has the privilege to bring the ladies free ; or the member can go to the reading-room and feast the mind ; or take a History (or some moral work,) from the library home to his family, and read, those long winter evenings by the cheerful fire, where his wife and offsprings can listen to truths which are the foundation of morality, virtue and knowledge. Let me remind you of a sentence uttered by Lord Bacon : “knowledge is power.” Ladies and Gentlemen, it is more, it is wealth, it is comfort, security, happiness ; it gives a charm to social life ; it supports religion, and purifies politics, it is, in truth an avenue, a roadway, to the mansion that is made without hands, eternal in the heavens.

To illustrate the truths of my arguments in favour of Mechanics’ Institutes, I shall extract some remarks made by Dr. Birkbeck and Lord Brougham, from their speeches

at the opening of the new theatre, Southampton buildings, in the Metropolis of England, 1825, when I was present : Dr. Birkbeck says;—"It will be universally admitted, that we live, physically speaking, in a world of wonders; and by him, who has studiously contemplated the aspect and the achievements of mind, it will be no less freely admitted, that, mentally speaking, we live in a world of wonders also; but had it been consistent with the general order and arrangement, that cultivation of mind should have been universal instead of having been confined within certain privileged, but perhaps necessary, and therefore, unavoidable limits; it is impossible to pronounce, to what extent the wonders of intellectual creation might, ere this, have proceeded. That intellect, which occasionally bursting through the barrier of surrounding difficulties, like the beams of heaven glimmering through the darkness of the storm, has shed its brightness on a few favoured spots amidst the general gloom, instead of pouring out a flood of light, like the orb of day, when through a cloudless sky it blazes with meridian splendour. The "spirits of knowledge," those brilliant points discerned in the track of our species, those fertile oases in the wide-spreading deserts, forming the mass of human existence, have served but to render the long period of darkness more visible, and the vast regions of barrenness more conspicuous. Of those master-spirits it may be said, that as to their occurrence they are "like angel visits, few and far between." But man himself, it ought not to be forgotten, has for various reasons, in almost every period, strongly exerted his efforts to arrest or circumscribe the development of mind. In all ages there have existed individuals who have doubted the utility of instructing youth, in literature and science; and others possessing power, who perhaps, without entertaining the same doubts, have resisted the progress of knowledge.—Thus Elin states, that in his time, letters were considered useless or injurious; thus the Romans treated ignominiously Grecian literature, though they afterwards atoned for their brutality, by emulating the pre-eminence of the Greeks, in the republic of letters. In like manner, when the barbarians overran the Roman

Empire, which had been already ruined by conquest and luxury, and their consequent evils: they imputed the profligacy and weakness of the conquered to their education, this ill-founded opinion, prejudice I ought rather to call it, spread as the Gothic arms advanced, and became strengthened by the superior discipline and success of the conquerors: at last ignorance became so universal, that Herbaud, the supreme judge of the Empire in the ninth century, could not write his name; and even Du-Gesclin, the first personage in France in the fourteenth century, was, according to Paley, equally illiterate. This state of intellectual darkness has been, not unfrequently in various countries, protected and prolonged by the exercise of the powers which ought to have promoted their advancement in knowledge: thus the English Barons petitioned Richard the second, that no Villeyn, as the Labourer was then denominated, should be permitted to send his son to School; and in Peru, we learn from the statement of Garicilasso della Vega, that it was unlawful for one not noble to study. In the reign of Henry the eighth, a bill was tendered by both Houses of Parliament to the King, to prevent most of the Laity from reading the Scriptures. Amongst the Turks, a circumstance which cannot create any surprise, the art of Printing, we are told by Ricaut, "is absolutely prohibited," because it may give a beginning to that subtilty of learning, so dangerous to their Government. But in all these occurrences there is nothing to excite our surprise, compared with the sentiments of the late Mr. Colquhon, once the chief magistrate of the most important city of *Scotland*, of which he was a native; and aware. it might therefore be supposed, of the peculiar excellencies of his countrymen, which, with scarcely a dissentant voice, have been ascribed to the extensive diffusion of education at the begining of the nineteenth century. Mr. Colquhon (probably best remembered as the author of a treatise on the Police of the Metropolis) whilst occupying a seat amongst the magistrates, uttered these words, "it is the interest of every nation that the people should be virtuous and well disposed, but science and learning if universally diffused, would speedily over-

turn the best constituted government on earth." Lord Brougham's answer to this assertion is very simple, "If a Government does exist in the world, which would keep its subjects on a level with the beasts that perish, the sooner its away with the better. I hope it will not be thought that I am speaking seditiously of our own government; I can assure you that I have no such intention, for it is my firm belief that so far from science being inimical, the more enlightened, the more learned, and the more moral the people become, the more stability the government possesses: one instance will illustrate what I have advanced; Manchester, famous for many things, and amongst others mobs, and for riotous ones too, mobs of the worst sort, formed by the people presuming that their attachment to high-church principles, afforded them good exercise for all kinds of outrages: of the perpetrators of such outrages, lists on a late occasion were made; observe, I do not intend to affirm on which side the fault lies; misunderstanding at least there is on both sides; but this much I can take upon me to say, that the whole list has been gone through and most minutely examined, and the result is, that not a single man belonging to the Mechanics' Institute is to be found on those lists; many of them did their duty and stated their honest opinions, but in no instance was one found to violate the law." Lord Brougham is the working classes' friend, also Lord Elgin, who patronizes liberally Mechanics' Institutes, as does Her most Gracious Majesty and her Noble Consort. I cannot close my remarks without soliciting the assistance of the Ladies, who I am sure will follow the example of their Sovereign; they are a valuable class of our community, for without their courtesy and cheerful countenances at our Soirees, Tea Meetings, Pleasure Excursions and Lectures, we would be out of our element; and when we get a new Institution and an increase of members, we shall be able to have Vocal Music, and the Ladies will favour us with their company oftener. The benefits derived by hearing the lectures, are worth all the money you pay as annual subscription. I have had the pleasure of hearing the following eloquent Gentlemen Lecture—Professor Croft,

Dr. Connor, H. Ruttan, Rev. W. McClure, T. I. Robertson, H. Y. Hind, T. Henning, Buckland and Freeland, Esqs., and the different subjects chosen have been interesting and ably handled. I shall now give you my experience in Mechanics' Institutions; I was entreated by a friend, to join the first established in London, by Dr. Birkbeck in 1824; my friend said to me, I want you to become a member of the Institute, in which you will acquire knowledge; my answer was, I did not want learning, I knew my business, all I wanted was plenty of work, if I could obtain work I would join immediately. He assured me, that notwithstanding my objections, it would be the means of enlightening my understanding and improving my knowledge of business; my friend concluded by proffering me a ticket, if I would attend the lectures delivered in the Institute. I accepted his offer, and went that evening to hear a lecture on Phrenology: I sat as still as a log of wood, not at all interested, wishing myself out long before it was over. When the lecture was concluded, my friend inquired how I liked it: I said not at all, for I never listened to such nonsense before. Never mind, responded my friend, you will like the next better. According to promise I went to the second lecture, but as usual felt very indifferent until near the close, when some of his remarks interested me deeply; after I went home I could not help revieing them, and I believe with considerable advantage to myself. I went to hear the third and closing lecture and secured a front seat; saw the lecture-table covered with casts of celebrated and remarkable characters—the lecturer commenced, and I paid great attention; his language was eloquent, and his remarks upon the human head were so interesting and just, that I became quite a convert to Phrenology, and from that day to the present time I have thirsted after knowledge. Since then I have experienced the usual vicissitudes of human life; but being a temperate man, I have always found pleasure in study, and happiness in being a member of Mechanics' Institutes.

Go to Rochester and see their Mechanics' Institute,—the Reading Room is twice as large as this building;

their Lecture Hall will hold 3000, and the building has the appearance of a palace; these are facts. I would ask, can we not erect a large building as well as they? Are we not as industrious—as good Mechanics? Have we not intelligence? Have we not the means? These queries are easily answered, they are all in your power if you will only make use of the blessings you enjoy. What you want is unity; therefore come forward, join this Institution; every thing is advancing; your railroads will place your friends east and west within a few hours travel of your own doors. Let the New Mechanics' Institute be amongst the first buildings: endeavour to have it commenced next spring. A new era is started: let 1851 never be forgotten by the citizens of Toronto. The late Sir Francis Burdett subscribed £1,000 to the London Institute. I would recommend you to open a subscription list; let it be circulated among your liberal citizens, and who knows but you may find some Burdetts amongst them. Many in this City have risen to opulence and wealth; which they acquired by perseverance and industry; I have no doubt such will subscribe liberally; and I know a number of Mechanics, who will generously follow their example. My ideas to some may appear romantic, but look at the improvements which have taken place in the arts and sciences; improvements which have placed England on the apex of the world, and made her the arbitrator of the destinies of the human family.

Instruction in the elements of reading, writing, drawing, and the rudiments of arithmetic, are now within the reach of all. Even the son of the poorest artisan or labourer has scarcely, in any case, to begin life unprovided with what we may call the great pass-keys to all literary and scientific knowledge. Thus furnished, his future progress depends upon himself; and any degree of proficiency is within his reach. This is a striking proof how independent we really are, if we choose, of those external circumstances which seem to make so vast a difference between the situation of *man* and *man*; and how possible it is for us, in any situation, at least to enrich our minds, if fortune refuse us all other riches.

It is the general ignorance of this great truth, or indifference to it, that prevents it from being oftener exemplified; and it would be rendering a high service to the human family, if we could awaken *men's* minds to a sufficiently lively trust in it, and a steady sense of its importance.

By thus elevating the position of the working classes, the City of Toronto will be famed for its patriotism and internal improvements: though it may be said it is not as rich as such or such a city, still the intelligence of its inhabitants, its public buildings, and local self-government, must elevate it to a high rank and position among the cities of either the new or the old world. It might then be pictured in its power, its grandeur, and its might:—

“ As some tall cliff which lifts its awful form,
 Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm:
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

Before parting with you, allow me to say, that I find it impossible to convey to you any conception of the gratification your intelligent attention has given me; still less in having been allowed a share in trying to excite you to mental cultivation—to excite every one of you to dig in his own mine, which I assure you is the best, the richest, and the most productive mine in the world, and from the profits of which no one can exclude you. God grant that you may reap a full measure of these profits. Farewell.